

UNCLE ASHDOD AND SIM PERKINS

By Ellis Parker Butler

UNCLE ASHDOD AND A FLEXIBLE CURRENCY

Sim Perkins Seeks an Explanation for the New Currency Bill and Hears About the Reappearance and Sad End of the Whale Who Swallowed Jonah.

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"So, first off, we tried dried apples," said Uncle Ashdod.

"I wasn't talkin' about dried apples," said Sim Perkins. "I was talkin' to you about this here new currency bill. I can't make head nor tail outen it. I don't see why—"

"And the reason was," said Uncle Ashdod as if Sim had not spoken, "that there was five hogheads of dried apples on board the Sally Ann that trip. And them dried apples made purty good currency at that. If you want to spend 'em you could shaw 'em. Only trouble was that the Secretary of the Treasury didn't have no right control over it."

"What I sat you was to explain this here new money bill," said Sim Perkins. "That's what I sat you to do."

"I ain't sayin' but what it was keerless of me to start out on a voyage without money to pay the hands," said Uncle Ashdod. "But I done it, and I'll take the blame. Go ahead and blame, if you want to. I don't care. So I says, 'Fellers, sailormen all, I says, 'on an' after this date dried apples is goin' to be the currency on this here ship,' I says, 'and the rates of pay is a bushel a month to the captain—which is me—and a peck a month to the first mate and the second mate, and a quart a month to everybody else, including Mrs. Grady. She was the cook, and she was a mighty fine cook. She could cook biscuits you could chaw on like they was rubber. Some of the things she cooked you could cut, and some you couldn't cut, and some you couldn't chisel off with a—"

"Them old greenbacks was good enough for me," said Sim Perkins.

"Some you couldn't chisel off with a

cold chisel," said Uncle Ashdod, "so we made her Secretary of the Treasury, and she done good. When money was scarce she used to take a sprinklin'—"

"What for?" asked Sim Perkins.

"For to expand the currency," said Uncle Ashdod. "Money's scarce, she'd say, and she'd take the old tin sprinklin' can and go out and sprinkle them dried apples in the treasury, and they'd swell right up. Dried apples make one of the flexiblest currencies there is. There ain't nothin' better. You can make a peck outen a quart an' all you need is a sprinklin' can an' some water. So when money got easy again she'd fetch the treasury reserve in by the galley stove an' shrink it down again. She was some financier, she was. Kep' the interest rate right at 6 per cent all the time. Only trouble was that the fellers used to loaf around the treasury and chaw up the currency between meals. Couldn't blame 'em. Only thing aboard they could eat. So we hitched the old whale on behind the Sally Ann."

"What whale?" asked Sim Perkins.

"Jonah's," said Uncle Ashdod. "The steersman that voyage was an old Russian by the name of Gobbleskowsky and he was a livin' image of Jonah and the whale didn't know but what he was Jonah. First we noticed that whale was how it follered us, lookin' up sort of coazin' at Gobbleskowsky like it was sayin' 'Oh, Mr. Jonah, ain't you comin' aboard soon again?' We tried throwin' the Secretary of the Treasury's biscuits at the old whale, but they only dented it, they didn't drive it away. So when I noticed the white spot on the side of the whale I got the old telescope and

seen the white spot was a piece of paper—"

"Bank note, I reckon," said Sim Perkins, sarcastically.

"Plain note," said Uncle Ashdod. "Plain note, writ in a sort of anteeek handwritin' and what it said was 'Gone out to lunch. Back in half an hour. Jonah.' So we knowed it was Jonah's whale and that it had been hangin' round since the time of Jeroboam Number Two, waitin' for Jonah to come back from lunch. 'Well, I says, 'I reckon Jonah ain't comin' back from lunch,' I says, 'and we might as well take down that sign and put up 'Apartment To Let' and get the rent money.' So Mrs. Brady she hired the whale off of me for to be the First National Bank of the South Atlantic Ocean. No Secretary of the Treasury ain't happy without she's got a national bank or two to put the dried apple reserve in. So she deposited three hogheads of dried apples in the First National Bank. We had to take the trunk out first."

"Whales don't have trunks. Elephants has 'em," said Sim Perkins.

"It was Jonah's trunk," said Uncle Ashdod, "and we give the clothes that was in it to Gobbleskowsky, because they fit him, and then he looked more like Jonah then ever. You didn't ever see a whale weep, did you?"

"No," said Sim Perkins gruffly.

"No, sir," said Uncle Ashdod. "Because a whale don't weep so you can notice it. A whale always tries to restrain its feelin's an' keep folks from seein' its emotions. That's why it weeps inwardly and not outwardly. So when it exploded—"

"That currency system?" asked Sim Perkins.

"That old whale of a National Bank," said Uncle Ashdod. "It wept so much inward weep because Gobbleskowsky wouldn't come aboard it that the tears swelled the dried apples and swelled 'em and swelled 'em until the reserve fund puffed the First National out like a balloon. 'Get to contract the currency,' says Mrs. Grady, 'or the First National is goin' to bust higher'n a kite!' but before we could get the old whale aboard and alongside the galley stove to dry out he busted. Top! He went off with a bang like a cannon. Blew the whole roof off him."

"Ho, hum!" said Sim Perkins, stretching his arms and pretending to yawn.

"Panic, that's what happened," said Uncle Ashdod. "All them sailor men that

had put dried apples onto deposit in the old First National whale started to draw out, and some of our financiers was waterin' their dried apples and some was dryin' them in the oven, and nobody knowed nothin' nohow. That was a terrible day for the Secretary of the Treasury. She shoveled dried apples into the money market with the coal shovel until the aft deck was knee deep in an good dried apple currency as ever was, and still the interest rate went up. It went up to seven million eight hundred and sixty-four thousand nine hundred and fifty-one and a half per cent. So the ship's carpenter, who was national bank examiner, closed the First National Bank."

"He did, did he?" said Sim Perkins scornfully. "I don't care a ding what he did."

"He closed it," continued Uncle Ashdod, "because it was leakin' water at the roof. He closed it with a tarpaulin first, an' then he soldered a piece of tin roof on, and we was mighty proud of the job. We had the first tin-roofed First National Bank Atlantic. I dunno but we had the first tin-roofed national bank whale that ever cruised any Atlantic. Might be some shingle-roofed First National Bank whales cruisin' in the North Atlantic, or the east Atlantic, or the west Atlantic, but I never heard of a slate-roofed whale, or a tile-roofed whale cruisin' anywhere. Slate-roof would make a whale top heavy, and a feller would have to rig up a lead keel, and then the whale would set too deep in the water, and a First National Bank that sets plumb under water—"

"If any man asked me about the currency business—" said Sim Perkins Ashdod, paying no attention to Sim Perkins' remark. "That's what all of us said. You got to have a currency reform when times like them comes. So a gang of them sea lawyers got together and brung in the apple-sass currency plan, but it didn't look good. If you feed a lot of apple-sass currency to a hungry fully, 'An' squeeze them apples."

"You got to do something," said Uncle Ashdod, "if you can't never tell what'll happen. Maybe you'll get your apple-sass back and maybe you won't. Maybe you'll only fatten your old whale then, maybe," said Sim Perkins scornfully. "A bank so fat he'll be a dinged old nuisance. 'What us fellers want,' I says, 'is a currency that's dried apple and that

meanin'ly—'if he asked me as polite as you please to explain the currency business to him, and I told him about a tin-roofed whale, 'I'd-I'd-I wouldn't know what to do!'"

"And we didn't neither," said Uncle Ashdod cheerfully. "Seemed like dried apples was purty near bet'n' ideal currency, and seemed like they wasn't with a cuss for currency. Seemed like a currency that would expand and contract like them dried apples did was what th' agricultural districts needed, but—"

"Agricultural districts!" snorted Sim Perkins. "Thought you was on a ship. I don't mind hearin' about a tin-roofed whale, but if you're goin' to run a farm on the ship—"

"We was all sea farmers. We plowed the sea," said Uncle Ashdod. "But it didn't seem like a currency that would blow up a bank that way was just right neither. When you got a currency that's goin' to swell up an' make a panic every time a dinged old whale gets the blues and starts to blubber, you got to do something."

"Hire a cider press from some old loan shark that comes swimmin' by just ain't dried apple. We want a currency that's flexible but that won't swell up

and bust the old First National whale. If we can get ahold of an undried dried apple currency like that we're all right. So the boss he speaks up and he says 'Did you ever eat one of Mrs. Grady's dried apple pies?' 'No,' I says, 'did you?' 'I've tried,' he says, 'but it can't be did. So I move we coin them dried apples into dried apple pies in Mrs. Grady's galley cook-stove mint,' he says, 'and we'll have a currency as flexible as an old rubber boot heel, and as indestructible as elephant hide, for that's the kind of pie she makes.' So we done so. We reformed the dried apple currency into dried apple pie currency, and we put the treasury reserve of dried apple pies in the good old First National Bank, and that currency didn't bother us no more."

"Whale didn't weep?" asked Sim Perkins.

"Weep?" said Uncle Ashdod. "Whale didn't have no chance to weep. Sunk like a piece of lead. Yes, sir, that there reformed currency foundered the old First National whale. Them was some pies!"

"Lies!" queried Sim Perkins. "Did you say 'lies'?"

"I said 'pies,'" said Uncle Ashdod angrily.



"Money's shrewder," she'd say, and she'd take the old tin sprinklin' can.



"We had the first tin-roofed First National Bank Whale that ever cruised the South Atlantic."

FEARFUL AND LOVELY CHINA IN WHITE HOUSE

Dancing Bears on Dinner Plates Used by President Hayes. Not All Our Chief Executives of Artistic Turn of Mind.

With the greatest of respect and reverence to our forefathers who dwell in the White House, it has to be told that some of them had mighty ugly china.

Oh, I know it sounds like a sacrilege. One is supposed to adore all that is antique, says H. K. E. in the Baltimore Sun. The lure of an heirloom should be a strong enough reason to fascinate us beyond our better sense.

To prevent giving an impression of the stumpy and frivolity of this light-hearted age one should bow an honoring head before all relics.

It is my determination to speak of the exquisite plates and saucers and cups and things in the china cases of the corridor at the White House. You'll think me too frank, perhaps, but I can't include all the china under this description of exquisite. The reason's very plain; all of the china is not beautiful.

Teddy Bears on Plates.

It is interesting because it is old, but no person with a true sense of the fitness of things would actually admire a plate decorated with little brown bears and honey and forest trees.

Somehow such a vision peeping up at one after she has eaten enough mashed potatoes to leave a bare place in the bottom of the plate is not conducive to serious thought or conservation. This bear plate once belonged to President Hayes.

That gentleman, or maybe it was his

GRITS HIS TEETH IN SLEEP.

Furthermore Hubby Wouldn't Bathe, So Wife Gets Divorce.

South Bend, Ind., Nov. 28.—An absolute divorce was granted Mrs. Gertrude Hunt in the Superior Court here because her husband, James Hunt, refused to bathe regularly and gritted his teeth at night so other members of the family could not sleep.

"He kept the whole household awake at night by the noise from his teeth," the woman testified.

She said further that in the four years of their married life she had never known her husband to take a complete bath. This became very annoying, she explained, and the court evidently appreciated her position, for the decree was granted without any additional questions being asked.

wife, had a most fanciful dinner service. There, in another dinner table, is a scene on a peaceful ocean shore. By the side of the ocean there is a flower-decked villa. Green grass grows boldly on the seashore and the ocean is rolling happily in toward the land. Close by the villa is moored a boat. The whole poetic scene suggests the sort of a honeymoon cottage one dreams of but never associates with.

The corners of another plate are turned over and on its bottom is a strange-looking article done in colors. It may be a tennis racket—did they play tennis in Mr. Hayes' days? It may be a lacrosse stick, or again it may be a snowshoe. At any rate, it seems strangely out of place on a dish.

From this same collection are several plates painted with huge orchids. The handle of one cup is formed by the green color and not too vivid to be artistic.

And the turkey dish. One must never forget this imposing relic so near holiday time.

The turkey dish is to be used as nothing but a turkey dish. It shows a huge turkey gobbler trotting around in the snowy marshes. I think they are marshes. The ground looks damp and loose.

Behind the turkey is a group of trees. The turkey is 2,654 times as big as the trees. But in no such proportion is one's idea of the relative importance of turkey and the parsley trimmings on Thanksgiving Day.

The Hayes collection is truly the most curious of all. The Roosevelt china and the Arthur china are easily the prettiest of the lot. A White House attaché told me that the Roosevelt china contained 1,500 pieces and was valued at \$20,000.

The Tafts used the same service. Mrs. Wilson, too, has found the selection of Mrs. Roosevelt quite to her liking. It is a particularly pretty set of gold and white Haviland. The pieces are daintily and yet comfortably shaped. There is just enough gold tracery in the design to be effectively and yet not garish.

A delicate old rose border, outlined in a faint gold stripe, gives the china from the Pierce state dinner set its greatest charm. The dishes are not shaped in an unusual fashion, but the tint of the rose is wonderfully chosen. It is a deep enough tone to give a bright note of color and not too vivid to be artistic.

In the Pierce collection there is a big fruit basket. I saw several of these curi-

ous old pieces in collections of other Presidents. Rather clumsy looking things, they stand on tall pedestals. The bowl part is usually patterned in an intricate lacework effect. Probably that was done to allow the ruddy apples and the yellow oranges to show their tempting selves through the openings.

I was copying a few inscriptions on the placards accompanying each Presidential collection when a long, lean man approached me.

He was evidently a tourist. Most likely he was one of the troop of tourists from the sightseeing automobiles at the White House door. With the others he had been tramping up and down the corridor peering everywhere.

FRENCH AVIATOR WOULD FLY TO AUSTRALIA.



JULES VEDRINES

Paris, Nov. 28.—Jules Vedrines, one of France's foremost aviators, who holds many records for continuous long-distance flights, has expressed the opinion that the time is not far distant when an aeroplane will be piloted through the air from Europe to Ceylon. Vedrines is now in Vienna preparing to make a flight from that city to Constantinople. After completing this trip, he plans to proceed to Ceylon, from which point he will attempt to fly to Australia.

"I say," the conversational stranger said, "Are you drawing diagrams of them things?"

I chose to be haughty.

"Not exactly," I said in tones intended to be crushing. But they didn't crush. The gentleman continued:

Attaches Good Fellows.

These White House attaches, by the way, are exceptionally good fellows. They are delightfully courteous and know when to stop before their courtesy becomes overwhelming. Lots of employees in government buildings simply confuse one with mechanical helpfulness.

But to return to the china, although I'd love to digress for one minute and

tell of the little gray furry ball that was resting in the middle of the corridor and was stepped over by half a dozen sightseers, and how this fluffy ball turned out to be a precious little marmoset kept by the Washington people, and a curious one of the Jefferson china, and a goblet once in the possession of John Adams.

Much of the very old china has been broken and is now carefully mended. One of the Washington pieces is in white and gold, and there are two blue pieces that remind one of the blue Canton, so popular now.

Jefferson China Elegant.

In spite of the simplicity of Mr. Jefferson, his china was elegant. It was of blue and white, with a heavy border of deep gilt. Each piece shows a shield and a "J" done in full gilt.

One would naturally expect Dolly Madison to have had pretty china. Tradition says that she was a lady of rare charm and wit. Several of her plates show her to have been likewise a woman of taste. They are white, banded in a buff and gold.

And besides there is a huge cup and saucer used by President Madison. Mr. Madison must have had a huge appetite. Indeed, the cups and saucers of most of our forefathers attest this fact. It is rather significant that with the rise of the cost of living the size of the dinner plate and the coffee cup has shrunk. Wise change!

It would be impossible to imagine a bigger cup than Andrew Jackson found desirable. Truly this impetuous statesman must have eaten heartily. Historians say this model Democrat was big in all things. His virtues were as gigantic as his failings. There is no doubt in my mind that this characteristic is true when applied to his appetite. His fondness for food and drink must have been even bigger in proportion.

Mr. Jackson's china, by the way, had nice views on it. They weren't views of the log cabins which were so familiar to the pioneer. They were views of a castle with stately trees on the front lawn. So you see Mr. Jackson doubtless was an aristocrat at heart.

A recent addition to the White House collection are the fruit baskets of President Tyler. They are blackened and charred. When Richmond was burned in 1862 they were in Mr. Tyler's home in that city and were taken from the fire in the condition they are now in.

Another valuable relic just added is

Washington's China Is Oldest in Executive Mansion—In Spite of "Jeffersonian Simplicity" the Sage of Monticello Had Lovely Set.

the silver pitcher given President Van Buren by his very dear friend, Benjamin F. Butler. This pitcher was presented to the White House by Mrs. Helen Singleton Green, of Columbia, S. C., who is a niece of the wife of Mr. Van Buren's eldest son.

Suggestive of the life of the early settlers are the decorations on the china of William Henry Harrison. These pieces show log cabins and sturdy oaks, and are really little landscapes in themselves.

Lincoln China Grotesque.

From the collection of President Polk there are several dainty pieces in pink and gold and two goblets, one in dark green glass, another done in the colonial pattern, so popular now.

Strange indeed are the pink flowers heavily laden down with pink petals on a plate in the Polk collection.

Miss Mary R. Wilcox, whose mother, a niece of Andrew Jackson, was born in the White House during Mr. Jackson's administration, has given a handsome silver candlestick that once belonged to President Jackson.

From the administration of President Fillmore there is preserved at the White House but one blue platter. Not the most devout admirer of President Lincoln could fail to condemn his choice of a dinner set. Truly it was almost grotesque.

It is not the dull rose borders flecked with big splashes of shiny gilt, nor the most curious about the pieces. It is the rampant eagle with wings outspread and an olive branch or is it a piece of laurel in his beak? poised for an instant on a shield done in glaring red, white and blue, that attracts and holds the eye. One meat platter in this collection is so very long and very narrow it was likely a chop plate.

The Grant china was pretty and showed an attractive pattern in salmon pink and white, with a faint tracery of delicate gold about the border.

President Arthur's china is of the same variety as that of President Hayes. There are six dinner plates in this collection. One shows a butterfly smiling a huge thing that looks like a brown thistle. Another plate reveals two merry little cupids, and still another has for its decoration enormous morning glories.

Considering the possibilities for securing Cleveland china, there is very little shown from this President's collection. There are several plates, one in red and gold, and three in white with a green

border, and another, probably an olive dish, is a miniature American flag. Colored bandings around the edges of the pieces have been a favorite pattern with all the Presidential households. Mrs. McKinley chose white with a greenish blue and gold decoration and a curious finger bowl. Mrs. Garfield chose a good design in white and pale pink with touches of gilt for her state dinner set.

Other mementos of this reign are dinner plates in and bordered in a dull brown and gold.

The popular pink and gold was the border selected for the white dinner set of John Quincy Adams.

China or glass from the State tables of all the Presidents is shown in the White House collection. The household of Andrew Johnson used the china of President Lincoln, whose unexpired term Mr. Johnson filled.

I hadn't half enjoyed the china and was preparing to go over the cabinets a second time when I saw the inquisitive gentleman approaching. He had been upstairs looking at the room where the marriage of Miss Wilson took place.

I was hurrying away from his eager questioning when I heard him remark to an old lady standing by the Washington china:

"Have you any ideas, Madam, how much this stuff cost? I'd really like to know. I bet I'd never have given it up if it had been mine. Now, would you?"

KILLS 700-POUND ELK.

Must Pay \$200 Fine, Father, Informant, to Get Half.

Lewistown, Pa., Nov. 28.—An elk weighing 700 pounds was killed at the borders of Seven Mountains, near Siglerville, yesterday by Dayton Alkens. He says he mistook it for a deer. Five hunters fired at the animal, but Alkens was the only one who hit it.

Alkens went before a justice of the peace today and furnished bond for the \$200 fine he will have to pay for killing protected game. His father was the informant, thus keeping half the fine in the family. The carcass was presented to the Lewistown Hospital for the use of the patients.